

twenty-six unmarried men of Herrnhut banded themselves together to prepare for such service when the way should open.

Two years later, Count Zinzendorf attended the coronation of Christian VI in Copenhagen, and while there some members of his retinue heard from a negro in the service of Count Laurwig an account of the condition of the slaves in the Danish West Indies. When this news reached Herrnhut it deeply impressed the members of the Unity, and Leonard Dober, a potter, was possessed by the thought of a call to go as missionary to these slaves, and independently of Dober, Tobias Leopold was also moved to devote his life to this work. The two men confided in each other, and eventually a letter from them was read, without names, to the congregation. In this letter they expressed their willingness to sacrifice life or be sold as slaves if necessary to carry out their purpose. Upon this letter alone is based the tradition that any Moravian missionary was ever sold as a slave, for in the event the sacrifice was not demanded. After due consideration the offer of Dober was accepted, while David Nitschmann, (the carpenter), became his companion instead of Leopold who followed two years later. It is well to remember that this was only ten years after the first exiles had settled in Herrnhut, and that the total membership of the Unity was at this time only about six hundred.

The missionaries left Herrnhut August 21st, 1732. Count Zinzendorf's carriage took them as far as Bautzen, and from there they set out on foot for Copenhagen, six hundred miles away. Their funds amounted to a little over three dollars apiece, and their only baggage was a bundle on their backs. Only once on their journey did they receive an encouraging word, and at Copenhagen they encountered all kinds of discouragement,—ridicule, opposition, evil stories of the West Indies, etc. Their quiet persistence, however, finally won support in Court circles, Princess Amelia's gift of a large Dutch Bible proving particularly useful. At last they set sail, in a Dutch vessel, on October 8th, 1732, for *St. Thomas*.

Work was begun immediately upon their arrival. Nitschmann was soon recalled, and for sixteen months Dober had no word from Herrnhut, when he was surprised one evening by the arrival of eighteen Brethren, one of whom was Tobias Leopold, his friend and companion in volunteering for the mission service. They took up the work in the West Indies, while Dober, who had been appointed Chief Elder at Herrnhut, returned to Germany. Soon after the work was bitterly opposed, and on false accusation the Brethren were imprisoned, October 22, 1738. Zinzendorf arrived at St. Thomas in 1739 and procured their release after they had been confined for three months.